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ABSTRACT

This article reports on the language planning efforts in the non-Russian republics of the USSR, where the Turkic languages spoken are highly divergent from Russian. Specifically described are the cities of Baku in Azerbaijan, the language in question being Azerbaijani, and Ashkhabad, in Turkmenistan, the language being Turkmen. The chief langauge planning goals include alphabetizing and standardizing the national languages, developing technical terminology, writing and publishing textbooks, training teachers, and training scientific manpower for further research in these languages and for recording their disappearing dialects. The language planners are native speakers of the languages who work in the departments of speech cultivation and in the language institutes of the universities and republic academies of sciences. The relationship between the national languages and Russian is considered, as well as the degree of interference from Russian. The public use of the languages, particularly in signs and broadcasting is described, as well as the importance and nature of language instruction in the schools. The future of language use in these areas is also discussed. (CLK)

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Some Observations On Language Planning In Azerbaijan And Turkmenistan

By JONATHAN POOL*

Language planning has had an obvious importance in the Soviet Union since the beginning and has at times been the object of decision-making at the highest political levels. In the non-Russian republics of the USSR language policy has been closely tied to nationality policy, and this in turn exhibits variations across regions. Especially high levels of persistence and development of languages distinct from Russian can be observed in the Central Asian and Caucasian area populated by fairly large groups of people with Turkic languages highly divergent from Russian and with traditional cultures influenced by Islam and also very different from the Russian culture.

This account will be confined to personal observations made during a two-week visit to this area in April, 1975, under the exchange program of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. The author spent one week in Baku, Azerbaijan, and one week in Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan.

Although sociolinguistic work takes place both in Moscow and in the cities of the other republics, it is mostly theoretical in Moscow. It is in places like Baku and Ashkhabad that language planning takes precedence over language scholarship, and language scholarship is mostly directed toward policy formulation and implementation. Language planners' goals include alphabetizing the national languages (e.g., Azerbaijani and Turkmen), standardizing them, developing their technical terminologies, writing and publishing textbooks on and in these languages, training teachers of these languages, training scientific manpower for further work on these languages, and recording their disappearing dialects.

The language planners in Baku are mainly Azerbaijanis, and in Ashkhabad Turkmens: native speakers of the languages for which they are making plans. They work in various universities and branches of the republic academies of sciences, especially in the departments of speech cultivation of the institutes of language (or language and literature). While some language planners compile ever larger dictionaries of the national languages (an activity carried out even in the Institute of *Russian* Language and Literature in Baku), others monitor usage in the mass media and help enforce conformity to the standard.

The language planners in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan are serious about their work to enrich their languages and extend their social roles. One of the few questions eliciting an emotional response in Baku is whether the Azerbaijani language will in the future be used as a language of science more, less, or the same amount. I found Azerbaijani professors vociferous in their claim that the language would enjoy a "more glorious" role in the future than now; they proudly displayed university textbooks they had written in Azerbaijani as proof of their commitment. Their view was reinforced by the displays at the Museum of Azerbaijani History, showing how the Azerbaijani people, having settled many centuries ago on the territory of the present republic, have been subject to many invasions and have lost many things to foreign conquerors, but have never lost their language, which, on the contrary, they have even imposed on their conquerors.

Sometimes Soviet policy opposes Russificationist tendencies existing among the population. Azerbaijani and Turkmen publications on good usage, for example, warn against excessive use of borrowed Russian words when the internal resources of the native language can provide a needed word. Standard literary Azerbaijani and Turkmen do not employ Russian adverbs, even though bilingual Azerbaijanis and Turkmens were heard using such words as *imenno, srazu, uzhe, v obshche, kak raz, sovsem, naverno, tol'ko,* and (adverbially) *znachit* in their Azeri and Turkmen colloquial speech.

On the other hand, no-one tries to pretend that the relationships between Russian and the other Soviet languages are symmetrical. Not only is much more emphasis put on the learning of Russian by non-Russians than on the learning of Azerbaijani, Turkmen, etc., by Russians, but also Russian is treated as a source for the enrichment of the other languages much more than vice versa. It is generally accepted that in the Turkic languages new terms which are not based on native roots will be borrowed from Russian. Exceptions are made for roots that have international currency but are not used in Russian. If, however, Russian uses the international root in a deviant form (e.g., *simvol*), the Russian rather than the international form will be adopted. (This parallels the traditional practice in Turkish vis-a-vis French forms (e.g., sembol, prensip, enstitu).

Baku is farther along the road to full utilization of Azerbaijani than is Ashkhabad for Turkmen. Public signs are more consistently bilingual in Baku, and the proportion of radio broadcasts in the national language seems considerably higher there. This is natural, in view of the two cities' national compositions: Baku has 46 percent Azerbaijanis and only 29 percent Russians, while Ashkhabad has 43 percent Russians and only 38 percent Turkmens (1970). Also, national language development began earlier in Azerbaijan. Turkmen language planners said they called in Azerbaijani ones for help in the beginning. By this time, however, professional language

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planners are trained in each republic without necessarily ever leaving the republic or studying via another medium than the republic language. Now that there are enough national specialists in foreign languages as well, Azerbaijani linguists assured me that everyone agrees on the principle of translating foreign literature into the national languages directly, and not, as some used to advocate, via the Russian translations of this literature.

Colleagues did not fear to disagree with each other in my presence. In Ashkhabad, for example, I asked two linguists whether 20 years from now a Russian and a Turkmen meeting on an Ashkhabad street and acquainted would more likely speak Russian or Turkmen. One guessed Russian still, but the other, remarking that members of other nationalities in Ashkhabad were already beginning to consider sending their children to Turkmen schools, felt the tide had begun to turn and that in 20 years the two hypothetical citizens on the street would more often use Turkmen. Disagreements, although minor ones, were also encountered on the extent of needed orthographic reforms in the Turkic languages. But if such reforms are to be carried out, the linguists in each Republic believe it is their business to decide what to change how and when in their own languages. If two different Republics decide to solve the same orthographic problem in two different ways (e.g., Azerbaijani and Turkmen renderings of /ɪ/+V), this is regarded as a small price to pay for national control over the national language.

The debates, of course, do not go on only among language planners, but also between them and language users. Terminology and speech cultivation agencies' decisions sometimes have the force of law (e.g., Committee on Terminology of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan SSR) and sometimes not, but in either case the pre-codification debates were reported to be at times very lengthy; and once they lead to decisions, they are sometimes followed by resistance or objections among writers, broadcasters, etc., and then by attempts at persuasion and/or reconsideration. This process may be similar to that in which language planning agencies in other countries engage.

In the schools, great emphasis is placed on successful language teaching. The professional language teachers whom I met, whether of Russian or of foreign languages, and whether in the schools of Baku and Ashkhabad or the Department of English at Moscow State University, were enthusiastic about their jobs and seemed to be doing them very well. There is no question about the fact that students in Russian schools outside the RSFSR learn the local national language, as well as vice versa, although not necessarily as intensively. In Turkmenistan, for example, Russian is taught in Turkmen schools beginning in the 2nd grade, while Turkmen is taught in Russian schools beginning in the 5th grade. Although this difference was explained to me as a result of the fact that Russian is a more difficult language than Turkmen, I think it would be truer to say that the commonly aspired-to level of competence in Russian is harder to achieve than the commonly aspired-to level of competence in Turkmen (in each case as a second language). Given the socioeconomic factors associated with each language, a hypothetical policy aiming at equal competence by each group in each other's language would probably require reversing the difference in years of study. From what I could see, Russian in the non-Russian schools and foreign languages in general are taught with a communicational approach, emphasizing and providing contact with the living language and its speakers. The one class I saw in a non-Russian Soviet language (Turkmen) in a Russian school was being taught by a substitute teacher, so the method used there may not be representative, but in that class a traditional grammatical approach was being employed.

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THE EAST-WEST CENTER is a national educational institution established in Hawaii by the U.S. Congress in 1960 to "promote better relations and understanding between the United States and the nations of Asia and the Pacific through cooperative study, training and research."

Each year the East-West Center brings together more than 1,500 men and women from the many nations and cultures of these regions. They work and study together while exchanging ideas and experiences in cooperative programs seeking solutions to important problems of mutual concern to East and West. For each participant from the United States in Center programs, two participants are sought from the more than 60 countries and territories in Asia and the Pacific area.

Five institutes with international, interdisciplinary academic and professional staffs conduct the East-West Center's problem-oriented programs. East-West areas on which Center programs are focused include communication across national barriers, culture and language learning, food systems, population dynamics, and technological adaptation in developmental processes aimed at improving the quality of life. Each year the Center awards a limited number of Open Grants for graduate degree education and innovative research by Senior Fellows in areas not encompassed by institute programs.

The Center is directed by an international Board of Governors of a public, non-profit educational corporation—known as the "Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West, Inc."—created by the Hawaii State Legislature in 1975. The United States Congress provides basic funding for Center programs and for the variety of scholarships, fellowships, internships and other awards. Because of the cooperative nature of Center programs, financial support and cost-sharing arrangements are also provided by Asian and Pacific governments, regional agencies, private enterprise and foundations. Additional cost-sharing of programs and participants is worked out with Asian/Pacific governments, regional agencies, private enterprise and foundations. The Center is situated on land adjacent to and provided by the University of Hawaii, which conducts classes and grants degrees for degree-seeking East-West Center students who also are involved in the Center's problem-oriented programs.

Conferences, Seminars, Workshops

INSTITUTE: The Summer Institute of the Linguistic Society of America at the University of Hawaii

LSA 1977 will be held in Honolulu on the U.H. Campus from July 11 to August 18, 1977. In addition to courses on general linguistics, ESL and bilingualism, there will be a component on language planning sponsored by the East West Culture Learning Institute. Courses will be given by Joshua Fishman, John Gumperz, Robert Cooper, Björn Jernudd, Jiří Neustupný and Joan Rubin. In addition, there will be a series of two week workshops on topics of interest to language planning practitioners. Finally, there will be two lecture series every week. Further information on registration and courses can be obtained from Dr. Byron Bender, Chairman, Linguistics Department, University of Hawaii, Honolulu 96822.

SEMINAR: Language Planning

The Department of Linguistics of the State University of New York at Buffalo is conducting a seminar on language planning under the direction of Paul L. Garvin. The emphasis in the Seminar is on problems of the functions of a planned language in its social setting and of the attitudes of speech communities towards them, following the functional point of view proposed by Garvin in a number of publications (e.g. "Some Comments on Language Planning," in Joan Rubin and Roger Shuy, eds., *Language Planning: Current Issues and Research*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1973). Dr. Garvin reports that three doctoral dissertations on language planning topics are in progress.

CONFERENCE: Migrants, Migration and the National Population Inquiry

On October 24 and 25, 1975, a conference entitled "Migrants (i.e. immigrants) Migration and National Population Inquiry" was organized by the co-ordinating Committee for Migrant Studies at Monash University, Australia. The establishment of this body in late 1974 to coordinate teaching and research in this field and to organize regular open interdisciplinary seminars is symptomatic of the growing interest shown within Australia in its multicultural composition. The October Conference was intended as a meeting between researchers, community leaders and practising professional people. Papers on language planning were delivered by Jiří Neustupný and Michael Clyne.

CONFERENCE: Bilingualism and Education

This conference sponsored by the Royal University of Malta was held on the 19th to the 21st of April. It included two papers on language planning: "Language Planning Choices" by A. Davies (Dept.

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Research News

A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of English in South & Southeast Asia Lachman Khubchandani, RELC, Singapore

The study aims at examining the position of English in different multilingual societies in the South and Southeast Asian region, considering

- the entry of English in different sections of population in an historical perspective,
- the present role of English in education, administration, mass media and other socio-economic and technological fields, and
- the imperatives of developmental activities requiring English as a communication tool for accelerating deliberate change in these societies.

The project will be exploratory in nature, aiming at providing a sociolinguistic overview of English in the region where during the past quarter century since gaining independence from colonial powers, the role of language in individual and social life has been under constant review at different levels. This fact-finding study will also be addressing itself to explaining the processes of acquisition of English as a second or as a foreign language in different heterogeneous and homogeneous societies in South and Southeast Asia, and of setting or maintaining standards of proficiency, adequacy and identity in English in consonance with the internal and external needs of different nations in the region.

Chief sources of the study will be:

- published reports discussing the problems associated with language policy, language education, and language planning in these regions.
- information to be obtained from individuals and groups such as teachers, students, writers, journalists, translators, mass media people, administrators, ethnic leaders, public relation agencies, etc.
- Patterns of language usage as analysed from census records, readership and sale accounts of publications, bilingualism studies, language proficiency tests, etc., and also by correlating language factor with other socio-economic variables (such as age, sex, density, mobility, urbanity, literacy, religion, ethnicity) in different regions wherever feasible.

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of Linguistics, University of Edinburgh) and "Language, National Identity and Bilingualism" by J.L. Williams (Dean of Faculty of Education, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, SY 23 2AX, Wales). Two workshops are also of interest to language planners: "Educational Aims, Language, and the Maltese Community" and "Who should be taught a foreign language and when." The coordinator of the conference was Edward Williams.

Some Observations on Language Planning

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Soviet language planners regard their experience in this field during the last six decades as a unique source of information for their colleagues abroad. Regardless whether Soviet language policy is seen as a model for language policy in a given country, the diverse and rich storehouse of data that the Soviet language planning effort has generated ought to be used to inform linguistic policy elsewhere, whenever relevant. It will be to the benefit of language planning and language planners everywhere in the exchange of information between Soviet and other practitioners of this field can continue to grow. □